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# THE UNSPOKEN IN AL-WAHRANI'S DREAMS AND TALES MODELS OF PERSONALITIES OF HIS ERA

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## ABSTRACT

*This research analysed the implicit elements in Al-Wahrani's dreams and narratives by investigating the personality archetypes of his era and the themes inside these dreams and tales. The paper concentrated not on all characters, but specifically on elite models that exemplify political, cultural, and religious authority. The article analysed Al-Wahrani, the Ayyubid period, and contemporary writing models, there after concentrating on Al-Wahrani's canonical literature and his character within his writings. The report presented various findings, the most significant of which were: Al-Wahrani did not chronicle the histories of these figures; instead, he approached their narratives from his unique perspective, diverging from traditional literature. He consciously adopted an innovative writing style, recognising it as the most effective means to convey his insights on society and humanity, particularly the transformations occurring during his era. His satirical treatment of literary forms such as dreams, letters, and maqamat positions his work as a precursor to the concept of the Republic of Letters.*

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**KEYWORDS:** Al-Wahrani, the Crusades, Canon Literature, Satirical Literature, Republic of Letters.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Al-Wahrani's life (585 AH/1190 AD) is documented in biographical works (Ibn Khallikan, 1971, p. 386; Al-Safadi, 2001, p. 275) that detail his contributions and self-references, particularly regarding the Sicilian Maqam and its significance (Al-Wahrani, 2011, pp. 69-70, 1-75). He resided during the fifth and sixth centuries AH, corresponding to the eleventh and twelfth centuries AD. He journeyed to other nations after departing from Oran, Algeria, ultimately reaching Sicily, although he did not specify the duration of his stay there. He did not disclose the motivations for his departure, and it is probable that he left under duress from Roger I. Subsequently, he travelled to Baghdad and established himself in Damascus during the reign of Nur ad-Din Zangi (549-569 AH / 1154-1174 AD). However, he failed to attain his aspirations for status, literary renown, and financial success, owing to his engagement with the Crusades and the nation's reconstruction following the Great Earthquake of 1156. He was compensated for his labour in serving the mosque and providing instruction. Furthermore, he did not participate in the Diwan al-Insha or the Sultan's Council, and the offerings from Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, a minister in the Fatimid kingdom, fell short of his expectations.

### 1.1. Study Objectives

This study seeks to uncover the concealed and unarticulated dimensions of Al-Wahrani's visions and narratives through an analysis of people from his time that embody the political, cultural, and religious elite. The book aims to analyse how Al-Wahrani crafted a distinct literary form, diverging from the prevailing literature of his age, utilising satire and incisive criticism to reveal flaws and corruption inside Ayyubid society. The objective is to examine Al-Wahrani's reasoning for selecting particular individuals and his depiction of them using literary forms such as dreams, maqamat, and letters, which functioned as a counter-narrative to the official account. The study also investigates the influence of Al-Wahrani's writings on the development of the "Republic of Letters" and how these writings helped to portray a societal image that diverged from the dominant government narrative.

### 1.2. Study Questions

This study aims to reveal the implicit aspects of Al-Wahrani's dreams and narratives by examining figures from his time that represent political, cultural, and religious authorities,

answering the following enquiries: In what manner did Al-Wahrani create a literary form that diverged from the prevailing literary conventions of his age, utilising sarcasm and incisive critique? What motivated his selection of particular elite individuals, and how did he depict those using literary forms such as dreams and maqamat?

### 1.3. Study Methodology

The research employed a descriptive-analytical approach, integrating objective description with critical analysis. This was accomplished by a textual examination of Al-Wahrani's literary oeuvre, emphasising their stylistic and semantic characteristics, while juxtaposing them with the canonical literature of his day. The study utilised primary sources and modern references, emphasising the historical and social context of the texts' production, particularly the influence of the Crusades and political changes on literary discourse. The study thematically analysed the principal themes of Al-Wahrani's writings, including social critique and satire of the elites, within the context of the "Republic of Letters" philosophy. This strategy facilitated a thorough comprehension of the distinctiveness of these writings and its intellectual and social aspects.

### 1.4. New Styles of Writing: An Attempt of Interpretation

Al-Wahrani intentionally adopted a writing style characterized by sarcasm and incisive critique prior to his arrival in Egypt (Al-Wahrani, 2011, p.21) and before his encounters with Judge Al-Fadil (1199) and Imad al-Din al-Isfahani (1202), contrary to Ibn Khallikan's assertion that he resorted to this style due to an inability to match the aforementioned writers, thus "deviating from the path of seriousness and embracing humor" (Ibn Khallikan, 1978, p.385). Those who examine the works of Al-Wahrani, including maqamat, dreams, and letters, will discover that he introduced a literary concept termed the Republic of Letters. This concept signifies a community or network of intellectuals that constitutes a "republic," facilitating the exchange and preservation of ideas and information. Consequently, it transcends the confines of educated scholars and their discussion circles, extending to the broader society. This framework encompasses sub-literary genres that incorporate colloquial language from Islamic regions, alongside biographies of notable figures, geographical texts, correspondence, poetry, and marginal annotations (Al-Musawi, 2020, pp. 19, 193,

194). Consequently, documents reflecting the cultural output of the Ayyubid period have been preserved, exemplifying what is termed the culture industry, encompassing composition, street performances, and marketing. Despite the era's fascination with rhetoric, sermons, letters, and eloquent poetry and canon—products of social consensus and recognition by the cultural elite (Al-Ghanimi, 2021, p.28)—the writings of Al-Wahrani constitute a distinct facet of canonical literature. He depicted the age in which he resided and its figures from his unique perspective. His writings were disseminated and shared among the populace. He authored "renowned dreams and letters, which are esteemed by individuals, including evidence of his buoyant spirit and the finesse of his wit" (Ibn Khallikan, 1978, p. 385). The fascination with and appreciation for canonical literature coexisted with an interest in licentiousness, satire, and humor, each appealing to distinct audiences: scholars vs the general populace. Diwan al-Insha was historically formed in the Arab Islamic state as a centre of authority, serving as the patron of canonical literature (Al-Musawi, 2020, p.45).

## 2. AL - WAHRANI AND DIWAN AL -INSHA

The diwan served as the institutional venue where writers, grammarians, poets, and lexicographers created their works. It functioned as a central authority and cultural hub for high literature, acting as a research center for empires and city-states. Many authors, lexicographers, grammarians, and poets were affiliated with Diwan al-Insha; consequently, prose became the canonical literature in political discourse (Al-Musawi, 2020, pp. 42-45).

This institutional space constituted an insurmountable barrier for those attempting to penetrate it, as access necessitated considerable skill and acumen, qualities I believe Al-Wahrani lacked; hence, he produced literature rooted in his experiences and his aspiration to depict his era uniquely, aiming to communicate with the populace through his writings. He recognized that the fascination with writing about war and the information disseminated from the Crusader battlefield did not diminish the significance of the lives and experiences occurring under the surface, nor did the interest in and documentation of these matters.

Al-Wahrani was acutely aware that his writings would resonate with the public, as the drunkenness and ridicule prevalent in certain councils of his day became subjects for both literary

exploration and public discourse. The canonical literature indeed provoked such writing, as its elevated language intertwined with mockery, thereby descending to the level of colloquial language (Al-Ghanimi, 2021, p.150). This was categorized as satirical literature, which is not acknowledged by canonical literature. However, this provocation was met with a comparable response from writers whose works were excluded from the canon, characterized by their scathing satire of the latter. Consequently, the street opposed the councils of scholars, manifesting a discourse or counter-poetry, so to speak (Al-Musawi, 2020, p.30).

### 2.1. Al-Wahrani's Interest in the Unspoken

Al-Wahrani despaired in Sicily, which he entered after departing from his country, Oran; so, his aspiration was to serve the Sultan, as embodied by the Diwan al-Insha. His destination was Cairo, characterized by a diverse amalgamation of individuals, ethnicities, and ideologies, prominently featuring the Moroccan presence in trade, labour, jihad, Sufism, and the quest for knowledge (Al-Musawi, 2020, p. 27). Cairo was a significant locale for Al-Wahrani during that period, where he encountered scholars and poets. Engaging with these exemplary figures enabled him to depict an image of his era from his unique perspective, which evolved after a diverse and enriching life experience. His cultural references were shaped by his memorization of the Holy Qur'an, extensive knowledge of jurisprudence, Arabic sciences, and other contemporary disciplines, alongside his intellectual freedom and pronounced inclination towards wit.

The portrayal presented by al-Wahrani is absent from historical texts or biographies, as well as from formal or canonical literature, due to its emphasis on the unarticulated aspects of sixteenth-century AH society. He depicted a profoundly negative image of several significant and influential figures in the social, political, and economic spheres of the Ayyubid state, including leaders, jurists, and judges. Additionally, he addressed social maladies such as bribery, illicit wealth, the offspring of concubines, and the exploitation of religion and knowledge for personal gain, subjects that remain unaddressed in official literature. He continued by documenting his observations of the prevailing world system at that time and the moment of the Muslims' confrontation with Europe (Al-Wahrani, 2011, pp.78-79). Generally, no contemporary of Al-Wahrani was exempt from his criticism, as marvels and peculiarities characterized his literary works

(Al-Safadi, 2001, pp. 273, 275).

Al-Wahrani introduced a writing medium that could encapsulate a distinctive narrative of that era and its figures, which might be termed the alternative perspective; the audience cannot discern indications of the Crusades' jihad against them, despite the absence of warfare or destruction leading to conflict, even though he was a contemporary of these events. He documented his reflections on the elite of Cairo and Damascus societies, their intricacies, the dynamics within, and the adversities he endured at the hands of this society (Al-Haik, 2011, pp. 25-26).

### 3. CANON LITERATURE AND SATIRICAL LITERATURE

The Islamic cultural landscape, shaped by the interactions of travellers, scholars, poets, study circles, literature, discussions, and gatherings, fostered novel ideas, perspectives, and interpretations that influenced both public and private discourse. Additionally, contributions from the periphery, referred to by Herder as the hidden spirit, played a significant role in molding this cultural milieu and the cognitive framework established by the authorities (Al-Musawi, 2020, p.45). Literary works that captivated the public included narratives, irony, humour, and eroticism, albeit presented with sarcasm, alongside texts categorised as popular literature; consequently, Al-Wahrani documented an era in which he resided and illuminated obscure and overlooked facets of contemporary personalities, frequently portrayed in a derogatory manner (Saadli, 2020, p.216).

It can be said that a conflict among the agent powers in the social and political life, because of many political and social fluctuations, the stagnation of literature, the conflict and opportunism among many scholars, in addition to the dispute between the Seljuks and the Fatimids, and the isolation of the writers of the Diwan al-Insha, which formed an authority, which led to the consecration of a literature based on rhetoric, oratory and eloquence, forming an official state represented by Sultan Nur al-Din Zangi (d. 1118) and Sultan Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi (d. 1193) and their army and what the state of jihad imposed, and their military role, which was a very important stage and had its official, solid and consecrated literature, mostly issued by the Diwan al-Insha, and other literature issued by marginalized groups, belonging to another world of the common people, some jurists, many writers, job holders and courtiers, forming a popular state, showing a literature that

rejects reality, which expressed the absence of hope, and addressed what is unspoken in culture, religion and politics. The contrast between the affluent and the underprivileged societies prompted Al-Wahrani to concentrate on the biographies of prominent figures of his era. He did not chronicle their lives; instead, he concentrated on the unarticulated aspects of these individuals' experiences (Saadli and Wahiba, 2018, p.115). Consequently, he concentrated on dreams, as they serve as discourses that utilise the theme of delirium to attain the objective (Saadli and Wahiba, 2018, p.114). Consequently, two categories of writing emerged: an official, canonical type mostly generated by the first instance and predominantly published by the Diwan Al-Insha, and an unendorsed, satirical type produced by the second case and disseminated by those intent on promoting it.

#### 3.1. *Al-Wahrani and the Canon Literature*

##### **How does canon literature view this literature?**

The aforementioned study demonstrated that canonical literature emerged from a consensus and endorsement by the cultural elite, which subsequently became an integral component of society. This elite determined which texts were sanctioned and elevated to the status of literary authority, serving as the foundation for comparison among individuals, contexts, and meanings. The elites concurred that colloquial or trivial speech, as it was termed, was limited to either addressing the uninformed public in their own vernacular or relaying humorous anecdotes and texts in their own language; if expressed in a different dialect, the anecdote vanishes and the humour is forfeited (Al-Ghanimi, 2021, pp.28, 36). The Al-Wahrani language in these writings lacks total standardisation and is characterised by ridicule and humour, hence it is unequivocally excluded from the classification of canonical literature.

Al-Wahrani's literature is categorised as hilarious rather than obscene (Al-Haik, 2011, p.28). He did not develop this literature, as it was predated by ancestral texts that featured literature akin to Al-Wahrani's works, such as *One Thousand and One Nights* in narrative form and Ibn Al-Hajjaj's *Diwan* in poetry. Al-Wahrani revolted against conventional writing and developed his own style, drawing inspiration from the *Maqamat* and narratives of otherworldly journeys (Ziqam, 2020, p. 156). He did not introduce literature characterised by linguistic finesse and rhetorical prowess, as seen in the works of Judge Al-Fadil and Al-Imad Al-Isfahani; instead, he offered literature in a non-standardized language, diverging from

canonical and official literature, and incorporating colloquial and occasionally vulgar expressions, which official literature typically eschews (Ziqam, 2020, pp. 146, 150). His writings—stories, Maqamat, epistles, and dreams—articulated the author's thoughts, the zeitgeist, and the societal composition of his era, particularly reflecting the experiences of the marginalised, as well as the movements, language, dialects, and acts prevalent within it. He is a storyteller in written form; he does not narrate verbally but composes the story on paper (Al-Haik, 2011, pp.28, 29).

Moreover, official writing, exemplified by the art of letters, coincided with the ascendance of authority under the Umayyad state (Al-Musawi, 2020, pp.194, 196). This art emerged as a struggle for sovereignty, and "A Letter to the Crown Prince," authored by Abdul Hamid Al-Katib on behalf of the final Umayyad Caliph, serves as the most compelling testament to this (Safwat, 2020, pp.473-540). The role of Judge Al-Fadil in refining and utilising rhetoric, as evidenced in the editing of the Ramla Peace Treaty (Oqla and Tawahia, 2016, p.14), exemplifies the significance of the art of letters in relation to the ascendance and consolidation of power, as well as its triumph in the struggle for sovereignty. The correlation of authority, sovereignty, and the Diwan al-Rasa'il is exemplified by Judge Al-Fadil, the proprietor of the Diwan al-Insha, and al-Imad al-Isfahani, his subordinate in the Diwan, who collectively constituted an authority due to their prominence among the populace and their favour with the political establishment (Ziqam, 2020, p.145). Subsequent individuals claimed the authority to recount and document their accounts, including Ibn Nabatah al-Misri (d. 1366). The significance of the Diwan al-Insha as a pivotal state institution must not be underestimated, as its ascendance and decline, along with its achievements and shortcomings, frequently mirror the development of the Republic of Letters and the endurance of cultural capital; thus, Judge Al-Fadil established a distinctive rhetorical style that was appropriate for periods of conflict and expansion (al-Musawi, 2020, pp.268, 286).

Ibn Qutaybah, a pivotal figure in the evolution of literary art, offered insights on writing instruction and professional advocacy in the introduction to his work, *Adab al-Katib* (Ibn Qutaybah, 2006, pp.5-20). The extensive past, solidified by literary traditions, exacerbated the challenge faced by al-Wahrani in presenting a literature that diverged from the dominant narrative.

#### 4. PERSONALITY FOR AL-WAHRANI

Significant events are chronicled in historical records, which primarily document big battles, influential leaders, and heroes who shape the destinies of millions, orchestrate critical events, and redefine borders and nations. History books frequently neglect the social dimensions of those involved in events, overlooking their emotions and sentiments concerning various issues, as well as the dialogues among individuals about their suffering, instances of fear, vulnerabilities, disappointments, and moments of joy. Simultaneously, literature, both ancient and contemporary, has assumed this responsibility, with objectives extending well beyond mere recording or documenting. History is fundamentally concerned with recounting events, akin to certain literary forms—news, narratives, and maqamat. However, literary genres do not depict events in their raw form; instead, they seek to "rationalise history, eliminate falsehoods, soften its austere nature, and render it accessible and relatable" (Saadli and Wahiba, 2018, p.115). It reevaluates numerous events and individuals, offering an alternative perspective that may elicit agreement or dissent, yet ultimately reflects the author's viewpoint concerning these figures. In his book, Al-Wahrani examined the transformations and variations that transpired in Arab-Islamic society throughout the sixth century AH/thirteenth century AD. He depicted it through the personas of his day, with whom he was intimately familiar due to numerous experiences and close interactions. He concentrated not on all the men of his time, but primarily on the elite, the entourage, and the class associated with the rulers—Nur ad-Din Zangi and Saladin al-Ayyubi—and the powerful individuals (Al-Haik, 2011, p. 24).

##### 4.1. *The Reason for Choosing These Characters*

The inquiry is: What accounts for the existence of such personalities? The answer is uncertain, as they have influenced change, but not necessarily in a positive manner, and they may be prominent public figures—the elite—who make significant decisions that impact society (Khalasi, 2021, p. 338). I concur with Khalasi's assertion that many of these individuals belong to the Ayyubid elite and have significantly influenced change and decision-making; but, they also represent the establishment of a cultural, religious, and political authority. They are not merely figures in positions of authority; rather, they serve as the custodians of science, literature, medicine, jurisprudence, politics, and warfare. In the subsequent pages, prior to

examining examples of these characters, definitive responses to the inquiry are provided: What is the significance of these characters? Al-Wahrani neither authored a historical account of this period nor composed biographies of its figures. His writings are incorporated within biographical and historical texts; however, he offered a perspective on these personalities that reflects his stance towards them. Consequently, he unveiled precise details surrounding them and the events occurring in private councils, thereby presenting a distinct portrayal of an era characterised by warfare and conflict. Consequently, these personalities appeared cartoonish, as he amplifies certain traits to the extent that they eclipse other attributes, neglecting their roles in contexts such as combat or society, while concentrating on a singular scene, illustrating it, and embellishing the description through sarcasm and humour. Individuals seeking to understand the lives of the characters will discover them in the texts and volumes that documented the era in which he lived and the figures of his day. Al-Wahrani's portrayal, which evokes apprehension regarding the depictions of these figures in literature, may leave a lasting impression on the audience, particularly due to the negative and unforeseen representation he provides, which may be somewhat unjust. However, it is important to acknowledge that his work is not categorised as historical or biographical literature, but rather as satirical literature that reflects the author's perspective on individuals, society, and existence.

#### 4.2. *Changes in the Society*

Al-Wahrani did not explicitly address societal changes; instead, he provided a written work that emphasised contemporary human archetypes that contributed to this transformation and had a significant influence in this domain. We can comprehend his perspective about this development and his stance on it. Human models can be categorised into religious sects, including Shiites, the Prophet's family, and Sufis, or into political factions associated with ruling dynasties, such as the Umayyads, Abbasids, Ayyubids, Fatimids, Almoravids in Morocco and Andalusia, and the Almohads, who supplanted the Almoravids. He remarks on the Almoravids: "Their flame has been extinguished, their remnants have vanished, their sceptre has turned to ash, and their realm has been obliterated by adversaries." He remarks on William II of Normandy (the infidel of Sicily), who initiated a campaign against Alexandria during Saladin's era: "A waning state and

ephemeral joy." Its leader has succumbed, rendering it vulnerable. Its Goliath has become extinct, rendering it vulnerable. Its lineage has been dispersed, and its realm has turned against itself. They maintain it with compassion and diplomacy, following adversity and conflict. They furnish it with gifts and barrels, subsequent to armies and fleets. This indicates that following the decline of the kingdom and the cessation of its illustrious monarchs, the states commenced offering bribes in return for the military forces and naval fleets that the King of Sicily had mandated to assist them in his conflicts. (Al-Wahrani, 2011, pp.76-84) or professionals, including writers, as he did not exempt himself, physicians, and certain legal scholars. The Ayyubid family garnered both commendation and condemnation; while the author lauded the Ayyubid state in certain sections of his work, he vehemently criticised Turanshah, Saladin's brother and his deputy in Alexandria. Al-Wahrani's perspective suggested that Turanshah should resign from service, seclude himself in Al-Qaboun, abandon his repentance and prayers, consort with immoral individuals in Damascus, Mosul, Aleppo, and Iraq, indulge in the company of five spies, and immerse himself in

Nevertheless, the paper will not examine all prior models; instead, it will concentrate on certain personality models, which are as follows: Taj al-Din al-Kindi, Judge Al-Fadil, the courteous Ibn al-Naqqash the physician, Ibn Asrun, and Zayn al-Din al-Wa'iz exemplify detrimental transformations within society, notably the propagation of false claims to knowledge. Taj al-Din al-Kindi (d. 613 AH) composed a poem asserting his expertise in knowledge, eloquence, wisdom, sound judgement, and jurisprudence. Al-Wahrani refuted all his assertions regarding his proficiency in poetry, jurisprudence, and writing, subsequently composing a letter in response to Taj al-Kindi, which he dispatched to his associates. The entirety of the letter is predicated on derision of his assertions, as all he articulated is rooted in hyperbole and a façade of piety and erudition. However, as al-Wahrani observes, he condones what is prohibited by God, his conduct is antithetical to ethical standards, and he has repented with the aspiration of attaining the role of judge. The contents of this letter by Taj al-Din al-Kindi, along with Al-Wahrani's remarks, substantiate that he is (lacking in intelligence, shame, virtue, and success). Al-Wahrani (2011, pp. 55-61, 62-66). Furthermore, there are instances of assertions regarding noble ancestry, particularly

among those who allege descent from the Messenger, peace be upon him. They are present in all times and locations, and although he did not disclose their ancestry, he suggested that they are the target of derision by society. He referenced their designations, which signify their lowly status, such as Damin Al-Qiyan, Al-Rawas, and Al-Asida, each prefixed with the term "Sharif" in a manner of peculiar and biting irony. According to Al-Wahrani's intelligence, he stated that Imam Ali bin Abi Talib repudiated them, as he considered them more deserving of being from the progeny of Iblis and the lineage of Satan (Al-Wahrani, 2011, p. 234), rather than from the lineage of our master Mohammed, may God bless him and grant him peace.

### 4.3 *Al-Wahrani and Criticism*

Al-Wahrani openly and indirectly criticised Judge Al-Fadil, the author of *Saladin* and the head of the *Diwan Al-Insha*, since he established a cultural and political authority. Al-Wahrani, who sought to attain the *Diwan Al-Insha*, recognised that the path to this institution was fraught with peril, and that only those favoured by Judge Al-Fadil could get access, irrespective of their literary prowess, since he possesses the authority to give or deny entry. Al-Wahrani's primary objective was to attain recognition as a writer. You must adhere to the righteous individual associated with the judge and solicit his endorsement to the recipients of zakat, so that his blessings may be conferred upon you (Al-Wahrani, 2011, p. 107). Consequently, Al-Wahrani composed a letter of congratulations to Judge Al-Fadil, demonstrating his writing proficiency. Judge Al-Fadil's response was one of revulsion towards his own writings, leading him to abandon his aspiration to attain the *Diwan Al-Insha*. He pondered how the Sultan drew him near while distancing accomplished individuals such as Al-Wahrani, and it is perplexing why he was chosen as a writer while others remained inactive (Al-Wahrani, 2011, pp. 113, 127, 203). He did not cease at this point, but further directed his anger towards physicians, accusing them of causing patient fatalities, which is an exaggeration; medical practice had advanced throughout the reign of Saladin Ayyubi. To illustrate this, he pauses at Muhadhdhab Al-Din Ibn al-Naqqash, the physician (d. 1179 AD) associated with the Nuri Hospital. He served as the physician to Nur al-Din Zangi and thereafter to Saladin Ayyubi. He initially addresses the remark of his atheism in his discussion about those who have faith in nature. He subsequently references him in

the significant dream concerning the afterlife (the Day of Resurrection). He pauses before a tableau featuring prominent figures of his era, like Judge Al-Fadil, al-Muhadhdhab Al-Naqqash, Ibn Asrun, Zayn al-Din al-Wa'iz, among others, each endeavouring to attain deliverance from suffering and to justify their actions. Among the allegations circulated regarding Muhadhdhab al-Din al-Naqqash was his purported willingness to terminate the lives of the ill or expedite their demise to alleviate the Angel of Death from witnessing their final moments and suffering; in essence, he was rendering assistance to Azrael. Did you not know that al-Muhadhdhab was considered one of the most effective aides to the Angel of Death in this realm? He never admitted a sick individual into his residence without promptly suffocating them, thereby relieving the Angel of Death from the necessity of approaching him and enduring the repugnant odours. This occurred amidst mocking scenarios that are incongruous with the gravity of the Day of Resurrection (Al-Wahrani, 2011, pp.179, 223, 227). He seizes every opportunity to draw parallels between Judge Al-Fadil and Al-Muhadhdhab Al-Naqqash, highlighting their deficient religious fervour and moral shortcomings; no one in Islam has exhibited greater refinement in religion than these two men—the virtuous judge and Al-Muhadhdhab Al-Naqqash—nor have any been less virtuous.

In his critique, Al-Wahrani referenced Ibn Asrun (d. 1171) and Zayn al-Din al-Wa'iz (d. 1202) as individuals who exploit their religious authority to misappropriate endowment funds unjustly or neglect mosques to such an extent that he felt compelled to write a letter addressing the injustices faced by these mosques and their deplorable conditions (Al-Wahrani, 2011, pp. 39, 87-95). He condemned both the cultural authorities, exemplified by Judge Al-Fadil, and the religious authorities, represented by Ibn Asrun and Zayn al-Din al-Wa'iz, along with the power they wield. He promptly undertook this action while simultaneously denouncing the military, deriding the valour of Taqi Al-Din Shanshah, sibling of Saladin Al-Ayyubi, who fought beside him in the conflicts against the Crusaders (Al-Wahrani, 2011, pp.125-130). This text embodies both mockery and irony, alongside a reversal of roles (Bergson, 2004, p.65); the physician who heals individuals transforms into a murderer, while the valiant warrior who battled Saladin against the Crusaders withdraws for entertainment, all stemming from Al-Wahrani's hyperbolic style and narrative approach.

Consequently, Al-Safadi documented regarding Al-Wahrani: God bestowed upon him authority over Sheikh Taj Al-Din Al-Kindi, the courteous Ibn Al-Naqqash the physician, and Judge Al-Fadil, who refrained from express reference but rather reveals and charges him with numerous grave transgressions (Al-Safadi, 2001, p. 274).

## 5. HOW TO WRITE ABOUT THE CHARACTERS?

Did he explicitly write about these individuals? Did he dispatch the letters he composed to Nur Al-Din, Judge Al-Fadil, or others? The reality is negative; yet, he envisioned a council and its debaters, articulating his views through the voices of fictitious characters, and occasionally through unvoiced entities, as he inscribed writings on the tongues of mosques to denounce Ibn Asrun and Zayn al-Din al-Wa'iz. He reached a conclusion after presenting evidence and arguments that, in his opinion, certain individuals should be dismissed for their mismanagement of public funds; he subsequently barred one from his premises, diminished his status, and incarcerated him. Despite Nur al-Din's awareness of the complaint, Ibn Asrun and Zayn al-Din al-Wa'iz continued in their positions, seemingly to expose their actions, condemn them, and mock the privileges enjoyed by certain individuals. The objective was not to connect with their proprietors, but to elucidate the actions of these individuals and denounce them, thereby mocking the privileges possessed by a select few (LeBreton, 2018, p.38).

The aforementioned research indicates that Al-Wahrani's writings – comprising his letters, “maqamat” (rhymed prose narratives), and visions – were possessed by individuals and disseminated among them. Consequently, regardless of whether he genuinely dispatched these letters to their intended recipients or only envisioned a dialogue with interlocutors and composed them on their behalf, they ultimately reached the public. In my view, these letters and essays closely parallel contemporary social media posts and tweets. One of us may compose a message directed to a head of state or an institutional director, articulating our perspective, proposing solutions to specific issues, and advocating for the punishment of lawbreakers all without transmitting the message to the presidential office or the institution's office. Nevertheless, the objective of writing may still be achieved, as the message has successfully reached its target once it has disseminated and been perused by others.

### 5.1. The Maqamat and Characters

Al-Wahrani depicted these figures through literary forms such as letters, maqamats, and dreams, aware that his work would resonate with audiences. However, he employed irony akin to caricature, capturing often imperceptible movements and rendering them visible by exaggerating them to emphasise inconsistencies and distortions (Bergson, 2004, pp. 24-25). He magnified negative traits of a personality while minimising its positive aspects, concentrating on a specific facet while neglecting others. Unlike conventional historians and biographers, he eschewed commonalities, instead illuminating the concealed aspects of the character by presenting a satirical portrayal that inherently conveyed condemnation. The caricature serves not merely as a source of amusement, but as a medium for interpreting reality via a satirical lens, with its events ultimately evolving into historical narrative (Khattal and Kahli, 2021, p.806).

Moreover, these individuals are part of the elite, and those who examine biographical literature will discover significant facts regarding their life, such travels, positions held, academic leaves awarded, or conflicts engaged in (Al-Musawi, 2021, p. 180). The accounts of Ibn 'Asrun's significant achievements and positions in the Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyah diverge from those presented by Al-Wahrani. The same holds true for the writings concerning Al-Qadi Al-Fadil and Al-Taj Al-Kindi, as documented by Ibn Khallikan, Al-Safadi, and others. Al-Wahrani, however, disregards these factors and focusses on a specific scenario or occurrence to emphasise his thesis that this society is plagued by corruption, with bribery and the seizure of rights prevalent, particularly since the leaders are preoccupied with warfare. The earthquake exacerbated the situation, resulting in an increasing divide between the elite and their concerns, and the underprivileged who endure corruption and neglect in healthcare—despite advancements in medicine at that time—thus further widening the chasm between the elite and the suffering populace. Consequently, he articulated his thoughts on this low point, distant from triumphs and conflict zones, and society retaliating by mocking the liberties that were stripped away (Bergson, 2004, p.1277), while emphasising that the responsibility of the authorities is to secure safety, affluence, and well-being, irrespective of Sharia's concurrence. Concerning the state, it is the esteemed institution that established civilisation: mosques, schools, and educational circles (Zakkar, 2011, p.13).



The inquiry is: Did Al-Wahrani experience freedom? Was it a period of liberties? Did he shield himself with mocking, the maqama, or slumber, for there is no reproach for the sleeper? The function of a dream is to provide a form of psychological amusement through overt ridicule (Al-Ghanimi, 2004, pp. 78-79). Furthermore, Al-Wahrani employed the maqama or dreams as a vehicle for political, social, intellectual, and literary critique in a sardonic and derisive manner, serving as a means to evade societal constraints and censorship (Ziqam, 2020, p.147), exemplified in *The Great Dream*, where he critiqued numerous political, literary, and religious figures of his era. Consequently, ridicule serves as a political instrument frequently employed to express disdain for particular words, positions, or behaviours, as it directs attention to the opponent's vulnerabilities (Lebreton, 2018, pp. 63-64).

Consequently, Al-Wahrani eschews the prevalent arrogance associated with maqama, while preserving its traditions. However, he swiftly intersperses it with satire, thereby diminishing the style to a level that high canonical literature repudiates. As a result, he sought innovative writing styles that resonate with the elite, characterised by humour and derision, ultimately presenting a portrayal that diverges from the conventional perceptions of scholars, leaders, and jurists.

In doing so, he anticipated the Republic of Letters and facilitated its emergence; he discovered an articulate hero within the *Diwan Al-Insha*, far from the courts of sovereigns, and he delineated a cultural cartography in thoroughfares and pathways. The prevailing conditions concerning care were disrupted; so, the literary parameters of his words regarding dedication and introduction commence with: The unfortunate slave, not out of humility but as a proclamation of autonomy, did not compose at anyone's behest and was not compelled to adhere to conventional writing practices after forfeiting all opportunities to access the *Diwan Al-*

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*Insha* or the court. Consequently, we reiterate that Al-Wahrani saw that his writings would resonate with individuals, enabling him to fulfil his aspirations through this dissemination. Numerous authors discussing Al-Wahrani noted that his writings were disseminated throughout the populace (Al-Ghanimi, 2021, p.155).

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RESULTS

- Al-Wahrani was avant-garde in his unusual writings, which deviated from prevailing literary traditions.
- Al-Wahrani deliberately addressed the political and social turmoil generated by the Crusades, creating a unique corpus of literature that transcended official accounts.
- He utilised satire as an incisive instrument to unveil the concealed aspects of 6th-century AH society, diverging from the official war narratives and concentrating on the significant impacts of these battles on individuals' daily existence and their social and economic mobility.
- Al-Wahrani successfully developed a distinctive literary perspective characterised by audacity and profundity, rendering his works essential social and historical records for comprehending that period.
- Al-Wahrani predated the Republic of Letters by employing a style distinct from canonical literature.
- He introduced a writing medium and a deliberate approach, as his compositions were intentional rather than coincidental.
- He portrayed a distinct representation to the sixth AH/thirteenth AD society, far from warfare and battlefronts.
- He delivered a scathing critique of the society in which he resided using sarcasm.

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